



punch

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



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Charivaria

A ROME broadcaster said the war might have been avoided if Britain had understood Italy's foreign policy. Or if Italy had understood MUSSOLINI's foreign policy.

"It was German iron that gave us Poland," says a Berlin newspaper. HITLER has always held that it was a kind of stainless steal.

A neutral correspondent states that Sicily might now be regarded as a German island. So Herr HITLER is again at the end of his territorial ambitions.

Germany, we read, has recently accused a Swedish newspaper of not reporting the truth. This is believed to be a reprisal for the printing of irrefutable evidence proving Dr. GOEBBELS to be a liar.



An Italian General captured in Libya was found hiding in a flour bin. He is reported to have been very popular with his men. In fact even before this incident he was the whitest man they knew.

HITLER is said to have been fitted with a chain-mail shirt of a lighter texture than the one he wore formerly. This is taken in Berlin to mean a milder spring.



Italy is to send figs to the German army. This is to supplement its regular ration of invasion dates.

"What famous name springs to mind when you hear the word Sicily mentioned?" was a question asked Devon schoolchildren. For ourselves we should say Courtneidge.

SHIRLEY TEMPLE has emerged from retirement to make another picture. Older film-goers can remember when her name appeared in lights outside London cinemas.

Greek airmen in Albania reported seeing animals apparently unattended making their way to the coast. One theory is that they are Italian scapegoats.

Impending Apology

"The Rev. D. C. H. —, of —, said both youths were members of his Bible class. He attributed this to foolishness rather than any criminal tendency."—Local Paper.

A Rome broadcast announced that should Ireland be forced to defend herself against Britain the Irish will have the help of Italy. Mr. DE VALERA should be grateful for the warning.

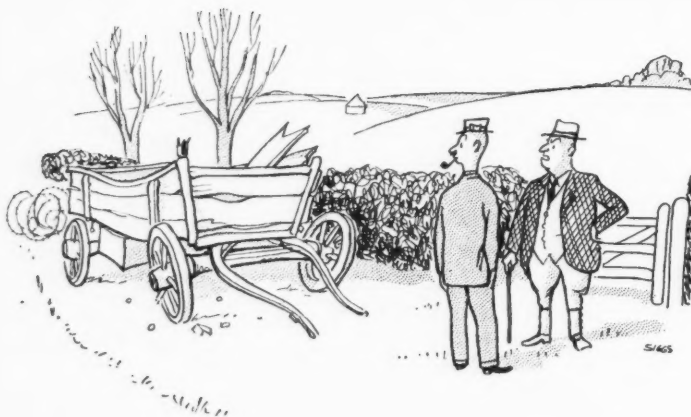


"TURKISH DELIGHT AT FALL OF BARDIA"

Heading in Scottish Paper.

They only got macaroni at the fall of Sidi Barrani.

"I once met GOERING on the stairs of the Berlin Air Ministry," says an American journalist, "and he was in a flaming temper." We imagine that in the circumstances it would be very hard to get round the Field-Marshal.



"They make fun of her now, but she stopped the invasion in June."

Home Guard Goings-On

A Jerk in It

IN the past, except for a number of uplifting pamphlets and a single thrilling glimpse of an inspecting General, we have not come very much under the spell of the Army proper. We have copied the way it wears its caps and slings its rifles, and we have puzzled over its knack of getting that neat overlap in its trousers below the knee, but these are superficialities unlikely to lead to any deeper understanding. Recently, however, thanks to the zeal of an ambitious few, more intimate relations have been established between our two forces.

The liaison had its beginnings in the cordial atmosphere of a public-house a few miles distant, much frequented by real soldiers. It was there that a keen member of "D" Section became friendly, towards the end of the evening, with no less a personage than a Sergeant-major. It transpired that this Sergeant-major would condescend, if asked nicely, to give our platoon a hint or two about winning the war, and the news was hurried home to our Section Leaders, who lost no time in putting negotiations in train.

When we of the rank and file heard of this windfall we were flattered and a little touched to think that a busy warrior, with many calls on his time and temper, should be willing to

squander the one and risk total loss of the other, with nothing as his reward but a promise of free transport both ways; and when it became known that our platoon was only one of several benefiting from his lofty altruism, our admiration for the man soared giddily. This was the spirit, we said to ourselves, that was going to whack the Axis.

However, when our Section Leader asked him, on his first visit, how on earth he found time to do so much for so many, he replied with a slight air of surprise that he had nothing else to do; was, in fact, attached to the Home Guard officially. This revelation exploded our theories about his lovable nature, but compensated us to a certain extent by swelling our self-esteem. To have a real Sergeant-major attached to us seemed to place us on a higher level altogether, even if the attachment had proved to be official rather than emotional.

It must be admitted that when he eventually stood before us we felt a vague chill of disappointment to find that this was not the Sergeant-major famed in song and story. Here was no fifteen-stone despot with purple complexion, spiky moustache and violent tongue, but a small pale man with smouldering dark eyes and considerable etymological restraint.

We soon learned that his stock-in-

trade, in addition to an undoubted grasp of his subject, included a small fund of mild witticisms delivered with no apparent expectancy of applause, and a disconcerting habit of hurling himself like lightning to the ground in order to demonstrate any point that might not be quite clear. His diction displayed that inability to cope successfully with the letter "t" which has done so much to enhance the popularity of Mr. Jack Warner. "Pu' a jerk in i'!" he pleaded, towards the end of his first Sunday morning with us in the Village Hall. "My dinner's all poured ou'!"

This is one of his favourite jests; another, and one which we shall not easily tire of hearing, is to beseech us not to look so worried, as we "ain't doin' i' for a livin'." And this is perhaps the secret of his tolerance towards us. As raw recruits who had accepted the King's shilling instead of Sir Edward Grigg's one-and-sixpence, we should probably have been bullied to death in the first five minutes, but the authorities have obviously told him that we are a touchy lot, entitled to quit in a huff if we feel like it, and have warned him not to provoke us into indulging this valued privilege.

It speaks well for us—or perhaps for some subtle magnetism in him—that we do not take advantage of his gentleness to treat him with anything but deep respect. Even if he does fall a little short of our conception of sergeant-majors as a body, the tradition hallowing his rank forbids that easy familiarity which we adopt towards our own superior officers. Some of the more impressionable of us even address him humbly as "Sir," and a member of "A" Section almost brought a blush to his sallow cheek by calling him "Major" throughout his first address. One young lad who has only recently joined us went a little too far in the other direction and prefaced a question with "I say, Sarge!" The rest of us held our breath, but the lad's only rebuke was a silent and unwavering stare directed at him for the best part of a minute and having excellent effect.

The same telling technique was employed to put our own Mr. Corker in his place, not for any breach of etiquette but because of his tendency to speak freely and exhaustively on any subject that happens to crop up. A burst of vigorous reminiscence about his own army days (when things were done quicker, better and more often) held up the Sergeant-major's discourse for some minutes; when the flow of words had at last died away under that

shrivelling gaze, with the inevitable coda of "... I mean, if you see what I mean, I mean ..." the Sergeant-major transferred his attention to the remainder of his audience and said, "I'll just repea' tha' bi' abou' the bayone' ..." The treatment was so effective that there has been talk amongst our Section of trying it on Mr. Corker ourselves sometime, but it is doubtful whether anything will come of it. None of us has quite the right sort of eyes.

When the Sergeant-major talks to us there is a strange atmosphere of the school-room hovering over us all. Once more wondering Ignorance is dazzled by wonderful Knowledge; once more we feel a self-important glow when some special duty exalts us above the rest of the class (lending teacher our rifle, for instance, or hastening to pick up his fallen notebook); and although things have not quite reached the stage when we bring bunches of wild flowers and lay them adoringly before his army boots, there is a scuffle to hand him a cigarette when we are dismissed, and a rivalry for the distinction of driving him home, which must surely be a corresponding adult manifestation of the forgotten homage of youth.

He is a bloodthirsty little man, this khaki-clad schoolmaster, and the invective which he refrains from hurling at our heads is reserved for references to the enemy, singly or in the mass. The invader whose schemes it will be our joy to foil is always described by the Sergeant-major as "— Jerry," and this without any word of apology or false diffidence. It is "— Jerry" who is hiding behind the "bushy-topped trees" in the middle distance; "— Jerry" who is watching for our slightest movement as we lie in the "tussocky grass" in the left foreground; "— Jerry" who dives from the air on to our scanty cover beside the "rail-and-post fence," or has established a machine-gun nest in the "red-roofed building, right centre." The highly-coloured picture of the English countryside which the Sergeant-major has pinned up on the wall of our classroom is, in fact (and to use his own words), "stinking with — Jerries." The two main things to remember, he tells us as his last word for the day, are that "— Jerry" will shoot us if we don't shoot him, and that "— Jerry" will run a mile at the sight of a bayonet—provided of course that we grimace fiercely enough and shout loudly enough as we run along behind it.

After the first shock to our illusions we found ourselves on the whole much

impressed by our Sergeant-major. Some of us are even a little envious. Mr. Punnett and Mr. Benn, for example, the glory still in their eyes as they watched our Section Leader drive him proudly away to his long-poured-out dinner, both declared that if they had been younger men they would have enlisted without hesitation, purely for the satisfaction of working up to be Sergeant-majors themselves. But little Mr. King, leaning on his bicycle and gazing after the receding car, shook his head doubtfully.

"Ah," said he, with the air of one who knows his limitations, even though others may not—"but 'tain't everyone as can do it. He's got the gift o' the gab, see—aye, and eddication, too!"

Meiosis

A FRIEND of mine from U.S.A. Said "How I like the English way Of understating things ... meiosis ... That is, in reasonable doses! For instance, what a splendid plan To speak of Hitler as *That Man!*" "To call him man, it seems to me," I answered, "is hyperbole."

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The Long Way Round

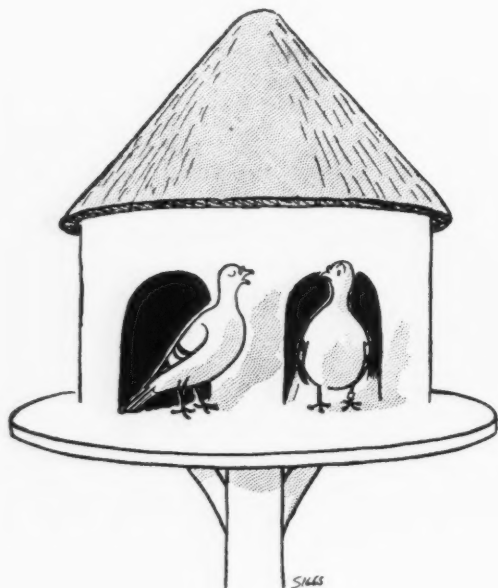
"Lord Willington, head of the British trade mission to South Africa, Lady Willington, and principal members of the mission have reached Santiago, Chile from Uruguay."—*Daily Paper.*



"Here! Lend me that gun for a minute!"

Fellow Passenger

I ADMIT it. Our war-time machine is not geared to its maximum point of production
 But will soon be so geared
 When we short-circuit wastage of labour and bottlenecks
 (bane of far-sighted construction),
 Fat man with a beard—
 Fat man with a beard in the bus sitting by me!—I grant
 that the Germans are crouching
 To spring on our coast in their millions from Belgium and
 France
 Or, it may be, debouching
 In even more billions prepared for a Balkan advance,
 Or swooping on Mediterranean islands with strong multi-
 tudinous wings
 (But our boys will know best how to beat them, and Hitler
 is tired of his pal).
 Say more of these things,
 For you must and you shall.
 I can see you are one of those men who can grasp an
 occasion
 When a bus is as crowded as this and the bus is a slow one,
 Being sure that whatever may happen about the invasion
 At any rate no one
 Can open his papers—
 Which leaves you alone to exhort and cajole and inform us.
 We have stopped by the drapers,
 But you will not get out, I am sure—you are vocal and vast
 and enormous.
 Now tell me that not till the summer the full weight of
 Roosevelt's assistance
 (Ah, summer, the season of roses!) will be at our service;
 Till then we must stand being bombed—how great, though,
 our night-fighters' nerve is!



"... and if it's something terribly secret they
 wouldn't DREAM of sending anyone except my husband."

Go on.

Do you feel, as I feel, that this war is a war of attrition
 By land and by sea, but the air introduces a non-
 Predictable element into the whole damn position?

I know that you feel it.

All hands should be put to the plough and the lathe and the
 rake, yet without overlapping.

And as to the future, well, Time will most likely reveal it,
 But our Cabinet won't be caught napping;

We have learned a great deal and the fire-fighting service
 is splendid.

Now say what you think of Tobruk,

I am happy to hear General Wavell so highly commended

And to know you approve of the dash of his troops and
 their pluck.

Now tell me with gestures befitting

All this and much more, leaving out not a line nor a note;
 But before you go on to speak further, rise up from your

seat for a moment, because you are sitting

On the end of my coat.

EVOE.

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Cautious Thinking

PUBLIC health has been standing up well, but we
 must not on that account assume that we are entitled
 to feel optimistic about it. There have, it is true,
 been fewer epidemics than were expected, but until or
 unless or because or however we know how many of them
 were expected, and by whom, it will be wise to draw no
 conclusions of any kind from the undoubted fact that there
 are not as many as there might have been had there been
 more.

A temporary increase in the ration of certain non-essential
 foods may quite possibly, and indeed perhaps probably, be
 announced in the comparatively near future or, it may be,
 even a little sooner. Nevertheless the increase, we should
 do well to remember, should it take place at all, may, and
 in fact almost probably might, be subject to alteration
 later on.

There is satisfactory news concerning losses sustained of
 recent date in a particular section of the globe. At the
 same time it would be premature to rejoice in any way
 whatsoever, howsoever, or whensoever, or on the part of
 whomsoever, since this news may be followed at any
 moment by quite other news.

The speed at which our Forces are crossing the desert
 would appear to indicate that they have a reasonable
 prospect of eventually catching the still-more-rapidly-
 moving enemy. We must, however, beware of thinking that
 because the enemy is in retreat it can be viewed as having
 suffered any kind of defeat. To confuse defeat with retreat,
 however much alike they may sound, would be merely
 wishful thinking, and it is absolutely necessary to remember
 that wishful thinking is worse than no thinking at all.
 The news of our successes must not, therefore or wherefore,
 lead us to suppose that we have met with any kind of success.

The news, though good so far as it goes, should not be
 received as going any further than it has gone. It should
 likewise be borne in mind that it may go elsewhere, and at
 a totally different rate of progress, on another occasion or
 possibly even on two other occasions.

It has been officially stated that it would be contrary to
 the public interest, to the Defence of the Realm Act, and
 to the whole spirit of the British Empire, to indulge in any
 form whatever of either optimism or pessimism in regard
 to any form whatever of any news whatever. E. M. D.



THE WAY OF A STORK



"We can flatter ourselves now we're all equally in the line of fire."

Little Talks

WHAT are you at? Crosswords?
Or a War Damage Form?
I'm writing a leaflet.

Whatever for?

The Germans.

They can't read.

Now don't be—

I'm not. They can't read—because they're not allowed to read. Especially not leaflets from the British Isles. It's most unfair; but there it is.

Well, anyhow, listen to this:

DEAR GERMANY,
IF YOU WILL OVERTHROW HITLER
WE PROMISE THAT YOU SHALL HAVE
NICE LICENSING LAWS
LIKE ENGLAND'S.
INSTEAD OF CHEAP OPERA
THERE SHALL BE AN
ENTERTAINMENTS TAX.
ALL WOMEN
SHALL HAVE THE VOTE,
AND—"

You're raving.

I know. But that's what some of the bright boys would like. Listen to this now:

"As has often been argued in these columns, the war cannot be won without the encouragement of revolutionary movements in Europe, and they cannot be encouraged unless the promise of a social and economic revolution is held out by this country."

This country—mark you!

Sounds like the *Bilious Weekly*.

Go up top. It's from a leading article in that great organ. And that's what set me leaflet-making. The odd thing, you see, is this—

What?

The people who wallow in this sort of slush are nearly always very hot and angry against "Imperialism," whatever that may be—

And especially British Imperialism.

Yes. The essence of that charge, if I

understand the comrades rightly, is the interference of Britain in the affairs of other countries, whether in the interest of Britain or the others.

I know. Britain Butts In—the blundering old cow.

Or greedy old pig, as the case may be. Everyone must be free to choose his own way of life—India, Eire, South Africa, Ceylon. We're fighting, they agree, to preserve our own "way of life," but we mustn't impose it on anyone else.

Not if it's a British possession.

And, by the way, few of these boys have ever seen a British possession south of Brighton—

Or Bloomsbury.

Quite. They couldn't tell you the difference between the running of Calcutta, Canada, Colombo, Khartoum, Jamaica or Jerusalem. It's all just "British Imperialism."

And lousy.

But now look what they propose!

This same blundering old cow, greedy old pig, or what-not, is to hold out the promise of a social and economic revolution in almost every country of Europe.

Too interfering.

And there's more than that. We shan't, presumably, promise anything unless we're fairly sure we can perform it. But we can't be sure of performing anything in anybody else's country unless at a pinch we're ready to use force.

How d'you mean?

Well, suppose we decide that the best people to replace Hitler will be the Teetotal Party.

Hitler is a teetotal party.

Don't obfuscate the issue. Well, we promise—

"Hold out a promise."

Yes, there may be a catch in that. We hold out a promise that if they rise up and overthrow Hitler there shall be Prohibition in Germany after the war. Well, the Teetotal Party muster their forces, do their stuff, overthrow Hitler, and we win the war. They take power, summon Parliament—

Why do they do that?

Presumably we insist on that. Certainly the "Bilious Weekly" would. And the first thing they do is to introduce a Bill for Prohibition. But meanwhile the old Hun still feels partial to his glass of beer. There's a row, the Bill is thrown out, and the Teetotal Party too.

Jolly good show!

Yes, but what does poor old Britain do? She can do one of two things.

One generally can.

Shut up. Either (a) she can occupy Hunland, put the Teetotal Party back in power, and help them to enforce Prohibition with British troops—

Can't you see the British troops doing it?

Which would seem a bit high-handed and interfering.

And the Bilious Weekly would be the first to squeal about it.

Yes. Or (b) she can sit back, say she's extremely sorry, but it can't be helped. She's won the war, and that's all that matters. And that, of course, would be a breach of faith "sadly characteristic of the sordid history of British Imperialism," and so forth.

But, of course, your Prohibition example's absurd. They mean much bigger things, no doubt—

What?

Oh, well, Finance, the Banks, the Land, Capital, and all that.

Take any example you like and it will work out the same. And the bigger the thing the bigger the interference.

Well, I dare say we shall have to do a spot of interfering.

Quite. I'm all ready for a little. But

then I happen to believe that the poor old British Empire, Commonwealth, or what-not, has, on the whole, been a jolly good show and is still ticking-over pretty healthily. The Bile Boys don't.

Yet when they want someone to play Father Christmas all over Europe, who is it they cast for the part?

The same old blundering cow, pig and what-not. The joke is, you see, that we have already produced "social and economic revolutions" all over the world, and not even dear old Russia has done more in that line. But because they're labelled B.E. the Bile Boys won't look at them. And I wish that one fine noon one of them would pull a woolly over his puce pyjamas, creep out of bed, and briefly explain exactly what is the difference between "British Imperialism" and playing Fairy Revolution all over Europe.

Also, whether it's a wise thing to foul the old nest just when you want to hatch a dozen new eggs in it.

Anyhow, three cheers for the British Social and Economic Revolutions!

A. P. H.

Huge Opening

"Man wanted, drive horses; indoors or out."—Advt. in Devon Paper.

"The pamphlet—it has 15 pages—is being sent by the Ministry of Health to local councils for distribution to their shelterers. Here are some of the health hints it gives: Sleep.—Although it may make you feel like a sardine, sleep head to toe."—Daily Mail.
Even if it makes you feel like a whiting?



"No, no—tum tiddly tum tum tum ti tum."



"Good morning, Doctor. I want you to have a look at my centre of gravity."

Phyllis Fudge's Husband

THERE was once a girl named Phyllis Fudge who was also what is known as a bit of a scatterbrain because although she was always making up her face she could never make up her mind.

She was so good looking that she even looked good looking in her passport photograph. Her father was very wealthy and her mother was inclined to overeat too.

One day her father said to her Just a moment Phyllis so she said Did you want me? so he said Well as a matter of fact I would have preferred a son but your mother contradicted me as always so Phyllis said Well what do you want?

So Mr. Fudge said Have you ever thought about marriage? so Phyllis said Yes often but I haven't said anything because I know how fussy you are about language so Mr. Fudge said Oh marriage is not as bad as people say and Phyllis said No it couldn't be. Mr. Fudge said The secret of marriage is give and take so Phyllis said Yes mother gives you a piece of her mind and you take it but I've never heard you trying to keep it a secret.

Mr. Fudge said But wouldn't you like a home of your own with roses round the door? so Phyllis said Well what sort of roses? Mr. Fudge said Well do you know any young men who want to marry you? so Phyllis said How are you always described in the newspapers? so Mr. Fudge said As a financier so Phyllis said Well then what do you think?

Mr. Fudge said Well when they propose what do you say? so Phyllis said I either tell them it's unfair to drive on the

pavement when they've had so many ones for the road or else I say they must give me time to think.

So Mr. Fudge said Good gracious me child if you're going to wait until you start thinking you will still be Miss Fudge when you are ninety but surely there is one you prefer? so Phyllis said Well mother says all men are alike.

Mr. Fudge said Nonsense child for instance Christopher Columbus discovered America so Phyllis said Come come father de mortuis and all that so Mr. Fudge said You don't seem to realize how much we owe to America so Phyllis said No I leave that for the Treasury to worry over.

Mr. Fudge said Anyhow men who do things that no man had ever done before are so different from other men that there is quite a chance that they would make a success of marriage so Phyllis said Well the young men I know all read the same books and hum the same tunes and owe money to the same tailors so Mr. Fudge said Then I shall make it my business to find a young fellow for you who is absolutely unique so Phyllis said Well you can if you like I don't care.

Well soon afterwards Mrs. Fudge said to her husband I think George Dangit is rather keen on Phyllis so Mr. Fudge said Oh why? so Mrs. Fudge said Well he always makes a fuss of me and that's a sure sign so Mr. Fudge said I'm not one to hold that against him so next time he calls I'd like a word with him.

So one evening George Dangit came in and said Er I understand you er want to see me so Mr. Fudge said Er yes lovely weather isn't it? so George said Er yes. Mr. Fudge said Er not a bit like last year so George said Er no. Well after this bout of witty repartee they both sat down and stared at the fire for a long time and then Mr. Fudge said Is it right that you want to marry Phyllis? so George said Well I hope it's right but I know it's natural oh she is so sweet and so very intelligent.

So Mr. Fudge said Yes you're in love all right but my decision is that my daughter shall be the wife of a man who has done something no other man has ever done so George said Well last year I dived fifty feet into three feet of water so Mr. Fudge said Is that a record? George said Well no so Mr. Fudge said Well when you can do a dive that's never been done before you will be entitled to call me father and Mrs. Fudge whatever you like when she is out of earshot but until then you'll just have to get along without domestic worries as best you can.

Well George went away and practised his diving ever such a lot but you know what love is so just to show how very wonderful he was he tried diving a hundred and fifty feet into a damp sponge and everyone said What a pity and he was such a nice chap too.

Well the next suitor was an author so Mr. Fudge said Have you done anything that no man has ever done before? so the author said Well I have published a novel that no critic has called brilliant or a little gem or even a masterpiece. So Mr. Fudge said Ah but has it been recommended by a book club? so the author said Well yes so Mr. Fudge said Good afternoon young man. So the author went home and blew his brains out and naturally after that he wrote nothing but best sellers.

So Phyllis said Look here father don't you bother I will go on being single but Mrs. Fudge said Nonsense Phyllis you seem to think of nothing but pleasure and of course we shall find a husband for you so Phyllis said Well you can if you like I don't care.

So in due course the next suitor came along. He was an explorer and he said he had been to every part of the civilized world so Mr. Fudge said Is that all? The explorer said Well I penetrated into Nazi Germany but the people there didn't seem to think much of the place because they were always pointing to some other place and also I rather



"Look here, is a roof-spotter senior to a fire-watcher?"

think the natives are inclined to be unfriendly so Mr. Fudge said Really now you do surprise me. The explorer said And yet they have traces of civilization there because they pay income tax or at any rate they have a chap who keeps on making last demands but if you will keep an eye on Phyllis while I'm gone I will try to discover a tribe that aren't even civilized enough to think they know everything.

So he set off for Central Somewhere or other and later on Mr. and Mrs. Fudge had a cable saying Have discovered unknown cannibal tribe chiefs name unpronounceable. Naturally Mr. Fudge was ever so pleased but a few days later he had another cable saying Your friend has entered into our midst we all pronounced him delicious so Mrs. Fudge said Oh well never mind better luck next time.

Well all sorts of men tried to win Phyllis's hand but not one of them could claim that he had done something no man had ever done before so Phyllis began to look forward to a peaceful life after all.

Well one day she was walking in the country when a funny looking unexciting little fellow waved to her and said Hullo where are you going? so she naturally said I'm not going I'm coming back. He said Don't you think it's rather a cold day to bring such an old joke out? so she said Well I always wear my old jokes out in the country so he said Yes your hat is pretty awful. She said Excuse me this hat cost three guineas so he said Have you informed the police? She said Why? so he said Because you have been robbed.

Well they went on being so rude to each other that they soon felt like old friends and Phyllis said Are you going my way? so he said Yes which way are you going? Phyllis said Well any way suits me.

So they sat down and he told her his name was Freddy and she said her name was Phyllis and he said That's a nice name so she said Yours is nice too and before long she was sharing his pressed beef sandwiches and telling him a recipe for chilblains and in fact the whole atmosphere was thoroughly romantic.

So they saw quite a lot of each other and one evening a few weeks later Freddy went in to Mr. Fudge's study and said Oh hullo Fudge old man I know it is only a formality but may I have your permission to be married to your daughter? So Mr. Fudge said Young man I don't know who you are or what you are or even why you are but better men than you have failed to make the grade because I insist that my daughter will be the wife of a man who has done something no other man has ever done so Freddy said Then I'm the man you've been looking for.

Mr. Fudge said You don't mean to tell me that a little whippersnapper like you has done something no man has ever done before so Freddy said I certainly do mean to tell you that I have done something no man has ever done before so Mr. Fudge said Well what? And Freddy said I married your daughter at twelve o'clock to day.

So Phyllis and Freddy lived fairly happily ever after although sometimes when Phyllis talks about the terrible things that happened to the explorer and to George Dangit and so on Freddy sighs and says 'Tis better to have loved and lost and when Phyllis says Go on dear finish the quotation he simply says That's all dear and goes on reading the paper.

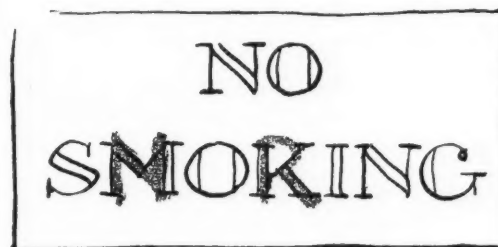
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A Fisherman's Prayer (1941)

GRANT me this prayer, O Lord,
That when my present job is done
I may return once more
To those quiet haunts
By reed and river,
Sedge and sand.

To wander down the old familiar paths,
Find mill and meadow as they always were,
See the first mayfly on the Orchard Pool
And hear the stock-dove in the Manor woods,
Or by the Bowmen's Ford
Feel in my face again
The sting of April rain.

But best of all, O Lord,
To stand below the Rectory stepping-stones
Waiting the evening rise,
My greenheart in my hand. G. C. N.



Hitler's Bumps

OWN up, now: wouldn't you like to feel Hitler's bumps?

I say nothing about adding to their number; I leave the obvious jokes to other people—who indeed always get applauded for them (so long as they pepper them with exclamation-marks, or say them loud enough). I simply mean that you might like to satisfy your curiosity about such bumps as Hitler may have, up to the time of going to press. It seems that nine-tenths of the trouble in the world to-day is indirectly traceable to the fact that nobody ever did feel Hitler's bumps.

I take this conclusion from some duplicated typewritten pages headed "Hitler Phrenologically Revealed," by Professor J. Millott Severn, F.B.P.S., Brighton, which have been lying about my desk for two months now, but which I have hitherto disgracefully neglected to examine. They begin arrestingly "What about Hitler?" and cautiously proceed, without giving you any chance to reply, "So very many clients and others having asked me this question, I have decided to phrenologically reveal him." Thereafter Hitler is put through it for four and a half quarto pages.

I may be doing less than justice to Professor Millott Severn's point, but as far as I understand it he maintains that if only, say back in 1925 (he doesn't mention a date himself), some phrenologist had been allowed to run his sensitive fingers over Hitler's head, noting his abnormal Approbativeness and Ambition and his very large Perceptive

faculties, the lack of room for Reason, the large Sublimity and Self-Esteem, and the only moderate Continuity, all would have been well. What I venture to ask is, How?

To an altogether unjustified degree, in my view, the phrenologist assumes acquiescence in his subject. Professor Millott Severn believes "that if Hitler had come under my hands years ago, before he had embarked on his murderous and predatory campaign, I might have"—(no, no, wait for it, wait for it)—"I might have put him on the track of otherwise gratifying his abnormal Approbativeness and Ambition, and probably prevented this destructive world-wide catastrophe."

I find it hard to agree that even the Professor could have put Hitler on any track at all with the hope that he would stay there. I take the view that Hitler would have exploded with fury at the idea that anybody was placing him on a track, in the first place; and that once he found himself on a track he would take the first opportunity to get off it (before a time-bomb could be planted). I simply cannot credit the notion that he could have been induced to apply what you might call his talents any other way than he did apply them.

Of course the Professor wouldn't have been crude about it. With the subtle understanding of a man who had long studied human nature, the Professor would have induced Hitler to believe that he was deciding for himself. That would have been the idea; but still I very much doubt whether it would have worked.

It helps sometimes to visualize concrete details. Where, for instance, would this encounter have taken place? Probably in a beer-cellar; for I get the impression that Hitler, the teetotter, used to spend most of his waking hours in beer-cellars, presumably getting drunk by inhalation. We therefore have Hitler in rowdy company in some beer-cellar, with Professor J. Millott Severn at work on his head. Hitler has insisted on the Professor's standing in front of him and not behind, for he is never sure that somebody behind him—particularly a Professor, an intellectual—may not be about to stab him in the back. He has also refused to bend his knees, or stand up, or sit down, or move his head in any way, and he has warned the Professor not to tickle him because it is against his principles to laugh when there are no small children present.

Surmounting these difficulties as best he can, Professor Millott Severn finds those protuberances on Hitler's skull that are so eloquent of Ambition, Approbativeness, and the rest. He realizes instantly that something must be done if in the gratification of these instincts Hitler is not at some future date to pitchfork the world into (I take this phrase from the Professor's statement) a disorganized, calamitous and almost unbearable turmoil. So what does he do?

You tell me. It is precisely what I can't imagine. Does the Professor really suggest that he would by any means, direct or indirect, have been able to side-track Hitler and make him decide to go in for architecture, or painting, or civil aviation, or piano-tuning, or polish-manufacture, or what have you, instead of conquering the world and being driven through it in a car flapping his arm like a seal?

Ah, well. Late or not, and working entirely from photographs, the Professor has summed Hitler up all right now. He says among other things that Hitler "is in love with himself, and in this is without a rival in the world." Whether or no that is precisely what he meant, for this phrase I bestow on the Professor a small haunch of my benison.

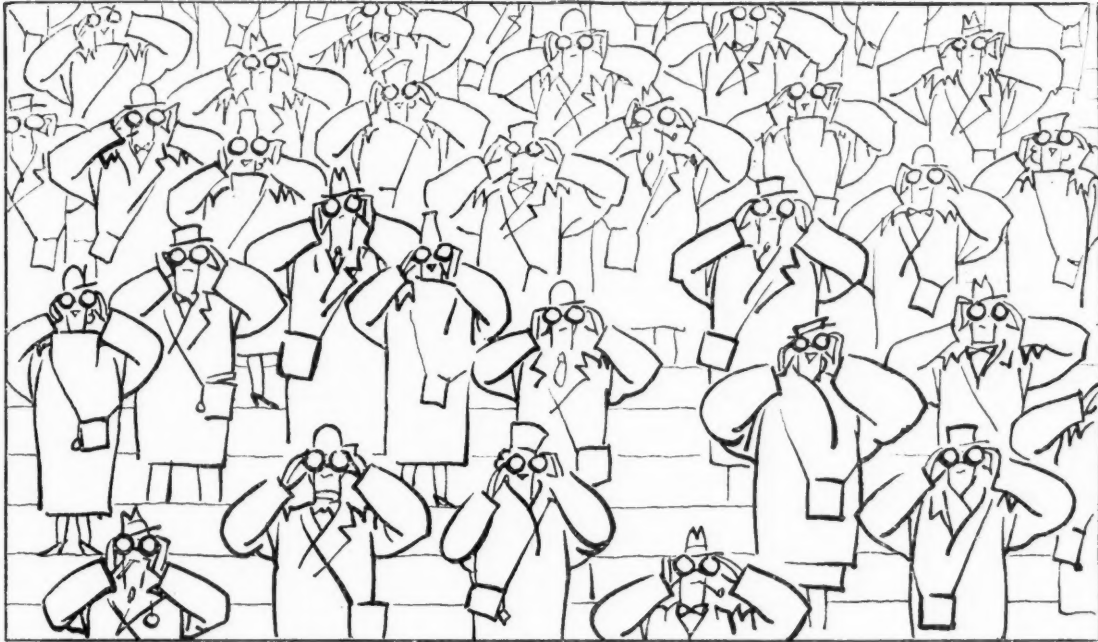
R. M.



"Tchaikovsky's Fifth! Jazzed!"

YET ANOTHER CHANGING FACE OF BRITAIN

RACE MEETING



THEN



NOW



"And where are your buckets of sand for incendiaries?"

A London Square

(Thoughts from the China Station)

I HEAR the Square has twice been hit . . .

I wonder what they've done to it.
I wonder if the lawns inside,
Where kids took tricycles to ride,
Are dug for Victory, or deeper
To shelter the embattled sleeper;
Or if the gardener, Robarts,
Still practises his floral arts.
There's one thing you can bet upon—
The kids and tricycles have gone.

I wonder is the lamp-post there
At our own corner of the Square—
The one we had reserved to use
For Uncle Edward when his views
Got too Blue-Tory for our taste . . .
And is our garden gone to waste?
And does the gate of Thirty-Nine
Still moan and whine, moan and
whine?

The paving-path towards the door—
Is that looked after any more? . . .

Our house, that my lone memory
fills

With sunshine, you and daffodils!
The glove-strewn table in the hall,
The pictures on the passage wall,
And Basil's rather comic Nude,
The crisp new books to be reviewed,
The sherry-set, the postman's knock,
Bringing the mail at 6 o'clock . . .
The letters yours, the papers mine . . .
A bath and soft silk shirt to dine;
A glimpse of Peter in his cot,
And in the summer, like as not,
Coffee at open windows, and
A lamplight-filtered fairyland
Over the road and railings where
Hovered the *numen* of our Square.

I think that we are both agreed
That those were pleasant times indeed.
They sing a song of peace whose
note
Catches me sometimes at the throat,

Evoking through these times of strife
Such other lovely things of life
As trout in May, and pheasants' necks,
And envelopes containing cheques,
And dog-rose scents along a path,
And Peter splashing in his bath,
And you and him, and that and
this,
And . . . well . . . enough of memories!

I reckon that from where we ride
Just now the slow Pacific tide,
With, a few hundred miles away,
A not-so-fabulous Cathay,
That memory-hallowed London ground
Is almost half the world around.
And I may not be back before
Another many months of war.

But when I come, will you be there,
And Peter, and indeed the Square?
I hear that it has twice been hit.
I wonder what they've done to it.



TIME AND TIDE

"Ready, Hermann?"



Mr. PUNCH'S HOSPITAL COMFORTS FUND

(Registered under the War Charities Act, 1940)

THIS Fund, which was originally started in order to purchase supplies of raw material and distribute them to Voluntary Working Parties for the Hospitals, has already sent out a very large quantity of Knitting Wool, Unbleached Calico and Veltex, as well as many other materials of all varieties, to be made up into comforts for the wounded.

Mr. Punch, in expressing his very sincere gratitude for the generous help already given by subscribers, renews his appeal both for the sake of the Fighting Services and of civilians who have suffered from the ruthless barbarity of the enemy, in the hope that plenty of supplies may be available for all now that the severest and coldest weather has set in.

Though we know well that these are days of great financial difficulty, we yet ask you, those who can, to send some donation, large or

small, according to your means, to PUNCH HOSPITAL COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

AUDITORS' CERTIFICATE

We have audited the books of the PUNCH HOSPITAL COMFORTS FUND for the year ended 31st December, 1940, with the vouchers relating thereto.

We certify that the whole of the expenses of administering the Fund have been defrayed by the Proprietors of PUNCH and that all payments made from the Fund have therefore been for the purchase of materials for distribution.

101, Leadenhall Street,
London, E.C.3.

J. H. HUGILL & Co.
Chartered Accountants,

21st January, 1941. Hon. Auditors.

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done

Tuesday, January 21st.—House of Lords: Debate on War Supply.

House of Commons: A little about Old School Ties; a great deal about War Production.

Wednesday, January 22nd.—House of Commons: Still more about War Production.

Thursday, January 23rd.—House of Commons: Committee stage of the War Damage Compensation Bill.

Tuesday, January 21st.—A few days before the war began there stood in the House of Commons an elegantly-dressed, tall, dark young man, speaking with the eager impulsiveness of youth, the intensity of one deeply moved.

"If war comes," he cried, "it is we, the young men, who will go forth to die!"

There was nothing of complaint in his voice. He said it as a truism, as something that had to be, something that should be.



ON THE HOME FRONT

"THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST"

"The great majority of the people were in dead earnest"—Mr. E. BEVIN.

Your scribe heard that voice again this week, saying those very words, in that same voice, that same tone. But it was only a memory. For Mr. SPEAKER, rising in a hushed House, announced that 33-years-old Major RONALD CARTLAND, Conservative M.P.

for King's Norton, the young man, would return no more from the field of battle. He had gone forth . . . and died.

In a painful silence Mr. SPEAKER went on to add another brilliant young M.P. to the list: Flying-Officer JOHN RATHBONE, who had also been killed in action.

They had, indeed, gone forth to die, leaving two empty seats in the midst of the crowded House, and it gave a sobering touch to the proceedings. "It is we, the young men . . ." seemed to become the text for the debate on war production that followed.

But before that debate opened, the House loudly cheered into his office Captain DAVID MARGESSON, newly translated from the post of Government Chief Whip to that of Secretary for War. Captain MARGESSON plunged right into the fray, with forty questions to answer.

It was the competent performance his friends had expected. It is pleasant to have from the Treasury Bench a voice that is loud and clear, and yet melodious. Question No. 1 was to Captain MARGESSON, so he had no time to be nervous. He gave great detail about the parcels sent to British war-prisoners in Germany, saying that in the month from December 19th to January 17th the G.P.O. had dispatched to the prisoners nearly 229,000 parcels.

There was a Question about allowances to members of the A.T.S., and even combative Miss IRENE WARD was charmed by that voice into a gentle murmur of "Thank you!" when the War Minister asked her to wait for the answer.

Captain MARGESSON raised a loud incredulous smile from the House by opining that any "other rank" asking his Company Commander for a copy of King's Regulations would be given it. He seemed to wonder why the House was amused. He is new to the office.

Then he said that there had been 21 cases in the last month of War Office officials leaving official papers in cars. Where the delinquents had been known they had been dealt with—Captain MARGESSON seemed to be searching for the correct term, the last word in rightness—ah, yes, by "*the usual channels*."

This is the traditional Parliamentary term for the Chief Whip, and the House appeared to enjoy this subtle way of conveying that the sternness from which some of them had suffered was justly being transferred to those who were careless with the State's secrets.

Plunging again into his mixed bag,

the WAR MINISTER drew out a complaint about a letter to the Press written by Lieutenant-Colonel RALPH BINGHAM, commanding an O.C.T. unit, in which he seemed to express a belief



"BACK TO THE ARMY AGAIN"

CAPTAIN MARGESSON

that the Old School Tie was essential to anyone who aspired to hold His Majesty's Commission in the Army. Middle-class men, said he, had "largely fallen down on the job" because they had no tradition of looking after their people first.

What about it? demanded Mr. MALCOLM MACMILLAN. Well, answered old-Harrovia Captain MARGESSON, in his best official tones, there was a paragraph in King's Regulations forbidding that sort of thing—writing to the Press and all that. And—dammit, Sir—Colonel BINGHAM was being told about it, and being asked for an explanation. When the explanation arrived, it would be considered, and then they would see what they would see.

Mr. ERNEST BROWN, Secretary for Scotland, contributed to Mr. Punch's Anthology of Parliamentary Wisdom this profundity: "You cannot have a truth that is not a truth."

Mr. CHURCHILL, faced with a complaint from Mr. TINKER that there was no way of getting redress for a wrong too delicate to allow of a Question on the Order Paper, suggested that Mr. TINKER should "wrestle" with the obstinate Ministers. Whereupon Mr. TINKER innocently sought guidance as



"Funny, that's the third lot of joy-riders I've seen this afternoon."

to the procedure to be followed if he "found himself up against a blank wall." Mr. CHURCHILL merely shrugged, leaving Mr. TINKER to work out his own programme of all-in, catch-as-catch-can, or free-style, according to taste.

Mr. GEOFFREY LLOYD, the young Secretary for Petroleum, was saved by the bell from having to explain in public to Mr. DENVILLE why he had not yet answered a letter dated December 9th, and then the new Government Chief Whip, Mr. JAMES STUART, performed his first public task by introducing the successor to the late Mr. NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN in the representation of Edgbaston, Birmingham.

Mr. ERNEST BEVIN, Minister of Labour, opened a debate on war production with a carefully-read speech that betrayed strong traces of the literary collaboration of Mr. CHURCHILL. Mr. BEVIN managed to get his tongue round such Churchillian phrases as "incomparably more complex," and "the trickle of airplanes has become a river and will soon be in full flow."

His own Department and phraseology appeared, however, when he hinted at the enrolment of all, irrespective of class or rank, for possible war-production work.

He got back to his more familiar style of oratory when, recalling that the Government had power to commandeer property, he turned on someone who wanted to know "Why not?" with the—plainly impromptu—comment that the House "could not expect him, in the short course of the war, to wipe out 1066 and all that." The Conservative cheers were not deafening.

No employer will be allowed to dismiss an employee except for misconduct; no worker will be able to leave his job without the leave of a National Service Officer.

Lord WINTERTON, speaking from the Front Opposition Bench, got so angry about production that he swallowed hard, gripped the edge of the Dispatch Box until his knuckles whitened, and announced that he was tempted to use a vulgar modern phrase. The House listened in pained, slightly horrified, astonishment, prepared to stop its ears against a flow of Billingsgate or barrack-square.

Lord WINTERTON, steeling himself for the ordeal, succumbed to the temptation and rapped out that "vulgar modern phrase" with reckless abandon. This was it: "It does not make sense!"

Members looked disappointed, like

small boys discovering that a "naughty word" created no ripple on the parental pool. Lord WINTERTON, blushing a little at his own temerity, went on with his speech, confining himself to further remarks that were neither vulgar nor particularly modern.

Many other Members had their say, but nothing of earth-shaking importance emerged from the day's debate.

Wednesday, January 22nd.—Mr. ANTHONY EDEN made his bow on reappointment as Foreign Secretary, answering a question or two.

Mr. ATTLEE, Lord Privy Seal, announced that the Government was giving £25,000 to the Lord Mayor's Fund for Greece, as a tangible token of Britain's admiration of the high-speed events in what is euphemistically known as the Greek Theatre of War.

Sir HERBERT WILLIAMS, leaping with belligerent eagerness to the fray, got hot and bothered about oranges, which, said he, were very short at Christmas. The cut-and-thrust of the battle grew so hot that Lady ASTOR—a little surprisingly for one so devoted to lemonade—asked whether there were not more important things than oranges in these exciting times. The House seemed to think there were.

Sir HERBERT came up for Round Two. What about the shortage of rum?

The Minister was understood to answer to the effect that there wasn't going to be no core, whereupon Lady ASTOR uttered the un-Parliamentary but expressive remark: "Hooray, hooray, hooray!"

Since she represents the great naval port of Plymouth, it was appropriate that she should use the naval form of cheer; but possibly (only possibly) her sentiments might not have earned a cheer from the Royal Navy in these chilly nights.

Mr. WILLIAM MABANE, of the Ministry of Home Security, re-entered the lists with the information that the proper people to take responsibility for fire-watching empty premises were "the occupiers."

The AIR MINISTER told Mr. AMMON that in the last 12 months there had been 26 cases of State papers from his Department being lost in motor-cars. This beat the War Office by 5 up. How many remain to play did not emerge.

Mr. MAISKY, the Soviet Ambassador, took a seat in the Diplomats' Gallery in time to hear Mr. HERBERT MORRISON explain that, much as he treasured the freedom of the Press, the *Daily Worker* had this time gone a bit too far and had been suppressed by Government order. The Minister said this in about 5,000 words or so, and Mr. WILLIAM GALLACHER, Communism's voice in the wilderness, called it a "propaganda statement."

Mr. ERNEST THURTELL, from the Labour Benches, gravely inquired whether the Minister's statement would not cause great disappointment—in Berlin. Sir RICHARD ACLAND called the statement a "damnable indictment," and Mr. CHURCHILL then promised a debate on the whole subject soon. And, he said, there will be a division, to separate the Red Sheep from the True Blue Goats—or is it the other way round?

Mr. CHURCHILL also promised a debate on the report of the Select Committee on Mr. ROBERT BOOTHBY's conduct in connection with Czech finances in London. The 290-page report found that Mr. BOOTHBY's conduct had not been worthy of the House.

So Mr. BOOTHBY resigned his office of Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food.

Then the debate on war production was resumed, to be wound up by Mr. CHURCHILL in a speech in which he "clipped the ears" of his critics and promised that he would see that everything went well.

Your scribe looked into the House of Lords just in time to hear Lord STRABOLGI, tensing himself defiantly

at the box, use the same "vulgar modern phrase" as Lord WINTERTON had used the day before, and on the same topic: "It does not make sense!"

Even in the Gilded Chamber there was a deplorable lack of shocked surprise when the dread words were uttered. Indeed the whole of the noble Lord's speech seemed to leave his fellow-Peers comparatively unmoved.

Thursday, January 23rd.—Captain MARGESSON announced that he had received the report from Colonel BINGHAM and that the breach of King's Regulations had earned the Colonel an expression of the severe displeasure of the august Army Council; moreover, the WAR MINISTER

considered him unsuitable to hold his command and he had been relieved of it. The House took this drastic action in rather startled silence; those who expected the "usual channels" to be severe were not disappointed.

On a Disillusioned Poet

HIS songs of man were as the dismal shriek

Of one who finds a spider on a shelf.
And yet how ill he could afford to speak,

Coming so near to being a man himself!



"Now then, you lads, the one thing I will NOT have is fighting aboard this ship."

At the Play

"DEAR BRUTUS" (GLOBE)

THERE is a cautionary rhyme, which nursemaids used to whisper to their charges:

*"My mother said I never should
Play with the gipsies in the wood."*

In *Dear Brutus*, Sir JAMES BARRIE applied that counsel higher up. It was indeed rash of so many worldly adults to become the guests of *Lob*, that astonishing mixture of all odd qualities. To the Methuselim of a Shavian He-Ancient he added a simian agility and a curious habit of dressing like *Mr. Mantalini*. Add the mischief of *Puck* to the nippiness of a weasel and *Lob* was obviously a host in himself. Victorian drama, with its taste for facetious sub-titles, would have labelled *Lob* an Underhand Fellow. Anyhow, he was the kind of gipsy in whose home-coverts nobody in his senses would look for safe game.

He led his guests up the garden, you will remember, and into his magic copse on Midsummer Night's Eve, the moon aiding and abetting, there to demonstrate that all their yearning for another chance in life was vanity and folly. The observation made to SHAKESPEARE'S *Brutus* on the futility of blaming the stars for our faults is made the text of a homily, a very light and tender tract on a large grim subject—just the lesson that BARRIE knew so well how to read us with plenty of moonlight and limelight to sweeten the instruction.

It is not, let us admit, a profound homily. The idea that we are "determined" characters, so shaped by our weaknesses that a second chance would be of no use, is not logically sustained. The author relented towards *Mr. Dearth*, the wastrel artist, towards his fiery, questing, anguished wife, and most especially towards the *Dearths'* dream-daughter who was a "might-have-been." With this lapse into compassion he made us understand that second chances might occasionally work well after all. Thus vanishes the argument that each of us, like the young man in the limerick, is a creature that moves in

predestinate grooves. Most of *Lob's* guests may proceed thus tram-wise, but *Dearth* is one of freedom's chartered vehicles—if not a libertarian bus, at least a trolleybus or half-way type.



THE ELOQUENT FOOT

Lob MR. GEORGE HOWE

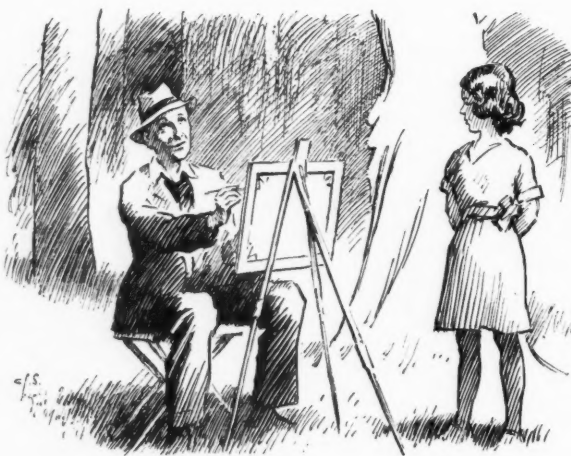
Plainly, if you start to make exceptions, the argument goes. You can reasonably believe either in determinism or in free will, but not in one for A and in the other for B. But does it much matter if the logic is lost so long as it errs in such company as BARRIE provided on paper and

Mr. GIELGUD now musters in the flesh? The dialogue in these days seems to walk very slowly, as befits a senior, but it has its own style and is a striking alteration from the monosyllabic gaspings which are gabbled at us in the comedy of to-day. "His people speak like typewriters," said Mrs. PATRICK CAMPBELL of Mr. NOEL COWARD. There is more of the quill pen about the utterance of *Lob's* guests. It is not a bad exchange.

This is a difficult time in which to venture on production, but at least he who takes the risk can, with so many theatres empty, form a cabinet of all the talents. Mr. GIELGUD has been able to add a troop of stars to *Lob's* particular brand of moonshine. He could go to what shining one he pleased and say "Will you join the leading ladies?" So here they all are, obediently co-operative in Mr. GIELGUD's leading strings—Miss ZENA DARE, Miss MARY JERROLD, Miss MARGARET RAWLINGS, Miss NORA SWINBURNE and Miss URSULA JEANS, while Miss MURIEL PAVLOW gallantly confronts the horrid task of being a Barriish dream-child and brilliantly manages not to make us feel embarrassed.

Easily might *Lob's* wood seem to be composed entirely of sugar-cane and honeysuckle, but Mr. GIELGUD's own performance as *Dearth* is so sanely and so safely astringent (as well as so adroit in its changes from crapulous maturity to jocund youth) that he and Miss PAVLOW dispel all fear that the management may reasonably be summoned for selling sugar without coupons.

As for the men, on the Immortal Side, as they say in pantomime programmes, there is Mr. GEORGE HOWE's admirably impish *Lob*. For the mortals Mr. ROGER LIVESEY leads off as *Matey*, and a fine florid performance it is. Mr. RONALD WARD is a most plausible philanderer, while Mr. LEON QUARTERMAINE is no less likely and far more likeable as the idle old dear, *Coade*. So, if we are to revisit *Lob*, it could not possibly be done in better company. Playing thus with the gipsy in the wood may not be a deeply instructive occupation, but it is certainly a very charming pastime for a wintry and a war-time afternoon. I. B.



MOONLIGHT HARMONY

Mr. Dearth MR. JOHN GIELGUD
Margaret MISS MURIEL PAVLOW

According to Plan

ONE of these days I shall write about my Uncle Charles' experiences as a farmer. My Uncle Charles attempted to make a living in many curious ways, but he never came so near to being anything as he did to being a farmer. Indeed my Grandfather Tootall once remarked that this was the most promising of his many failures.

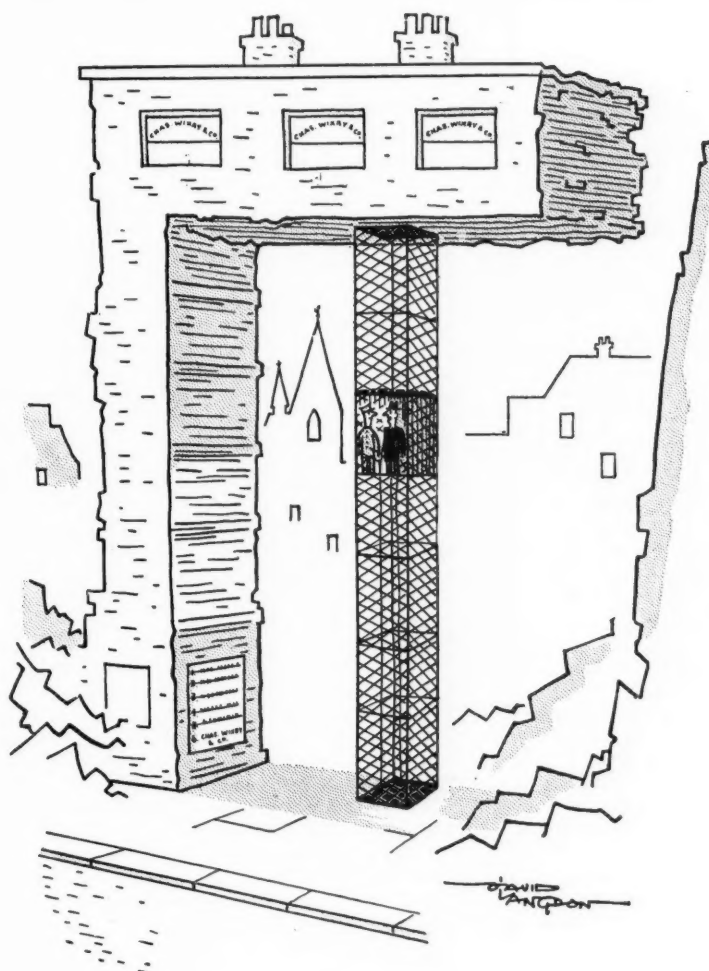
In a way my Uncle Charles was a successful farmer. He did not fall into the error of Orion Clemens, who observed in one of his casual moments that there was no money in fattening a chicken on sixty-five cents' worth of corn and then selling it for fifty. If he did not make money, he did not lose it, for he never sold anything save on paper. His fault was that he planned too much and executed too little.

Before he became a practising farmer my Uncle Charles formed the opinion that he would be more likely to succeed if he knew a little about the art of agriculture. Accordingly he approached my Grandfather Tootall and borrowed money from him with which to purchase books. He planned his farm as an architect plans a building. He would have a stream to sweeten his meadows, an orchard to pay for his house, downs for his sheep and plains for his corn, all within the compass of one hundred and twenty acres situated conveniently near some market town.

My Uncle Charles believed in science. As he read his books he found a place on his farm for every modern invention. He had tractors, drills, sprays, watercourses, pumps and milking machines. All this my Grandfather Tootall heard with patience and gravity. It was only when my Uncle Charles proposed to build a silo that he lost his temper. My Grandfather Tootall did not know what a silo was. My Uncle Charles explained that it would enable him to store grass without bothering to make hay.

"My boy," said my Grandfather Tootall angrily, "you will find that before you make hay you will have to grow grass."

Whenever I read about what is going to happen after the war I think about my Uncle Charles. What a success he would have been, and how greatly he would have enjoyed himself as a post-war planner! For, it would appear, we are to enter a period of unexampled prosperity. There will be work for all, money for all and leisure for all.



"Lucky? I'll say we were lucky!"

Already, on paper, our cities have become gardens and our factories bowers of bliss. Our only task is to choose among the planners. For there are differences of opinion, both as to what shall be done and as to who shall do it.

We may find one day that London has become an old-world city, with the ravages of the Great Fire replaced. Or it may become a symphony of steel and glass, chimneyless, noiseless and odourless. There are even proposals to rebuild it in bakelite, to bury it underground, to knock it down and abandon it altogether.

There is just as much discussion over the new industrial order. That there must be work for everyone all agree. But how much work, for how much

money, for whom and where are matters of grave dispute. No good Socialist wants to work in a Nationalized industry under a capitalist Government. Nor will any honest Conservative beat his sword into a ploughshare to use on his own estate to further the prosperity of a country ruled by arrant Socialists.

It seems to me that we want more than anything else a Minister for the Co-ordination of Post-War Planning—some man of tact and charm, above party and creed. Under his benign authority the hordes of planners could go into conference in some vast hall, to settle their differences and plan a greater Britain. For when they are safely out of the way we can all start sowing our grass-seed.

Loose Minutes

IN a room without a carpet I always get an uncomfortable feeling that I may after all be sitting on the ceiling. And besides lending weight to the law of gravity a carpet lends tone to a room, even in a Government office. The room into which I moved had a dusty map of Africa which flapped hungrily on its drawing-pins whenever the door was opened, but it had no carpet. Instead it had an evilly-fitting mosaic of bits of linoleum so tattered that they looked as if they had been chewed by every Secretary of State of every Government Department for the last hundred years. They looked as if the Corn Laws had been repealed and Home Rule thrashed out and the Welsh Church disestablished time and again all over them.

When I first looked at my new room I went quickly upstairs to an empty office from which I had already stolen an inkwell, and removed the carpet which had lain trussed up in the corner probably since the last war. The Messenger who lives in the little team-making dormitory along the passage helped me to spread it.

"Isn't it terrible!" I said.

"It's 'ardly a thing of beauty," said the Messenger.

"Who chooses Government carpets?" I asked.

"A cuss with blancmanges on the brain."

It may have been crude as art criticism but it was well within the target area. Four separate coverts of yellow shapes were marching in from the points of the compass and converging on an arena in which green tortoises were worrying a school of pink fishcakes to death. To offset the rigid geometry of this conception tropical vegetables had been encouraged to spring up wherever they felt like it and in whatever colour they wished. Lurking among them, rather ill at ease, were the blue-prints of a town-drainage scheme. The main background was a puce generously laced with lemon. To add to the general impression of horror and despair there was a long split down the middle.

"It isn't possible," I said.

"Don't worry, they'll never let you keep it."

"Why not?"

"You 'aven't enough braid."

He was right. That afternoon a sombre man came in and fixed me with his eye, and as he fixed me I could feel my petals wither.

"Afraid we must take this carpet away," he said.

"I'd be very grateful if you would," I told him, "it's giving me the willies. Perhaps you could let me have something a shade quieter?"

"Junior officers don't have carpets," the man announced.

"That may be," I said, "but in a room without a carpet my blood-pressure goes right down and in time I forget where I am. They've got a name for it in Harley Street."

"I dare say they have," said the man. "We'll fetch this this evening." Which they did.

When he had gone I went along and asked a knowledgeable friend how you got a carpet.

"You indent," he said, "on a loose minute."

"How loose a minute?"

"About thirty-thirty. You won't get one, of course."

I was not so sure. I had always harboured a profound respect for the good sense of the Civil Service. I rang for Miss Priddlequick.

"Please take down this loose minute.

To the appropriate secretariat. Head it Urgent and Highly Secret. 'While fully approving the most salutary rule by which the lower sorts of officer are protected from the softening influence of carpets, I am driven to make a special application for one in the knowledge that the strength of the British administrative system has always derived from its great elasticity. There is an exception to every rule, and to this one about carpets I am undoubtedly that exception. Ever since a psychological accident at an early age, the details of which would be tedious, I have been incapable of thinking except in very uphill terms in any room in which pile did not predominate over board. This curious disability, serious enough in peace, is doubly so when hostilities are rife. It is a sobering thought that if during my work at this vital Ministry I am to be kept, as my rank dictates, in direct contact with linoleum, my war effort will remain far—I would say seriously—short of its potential. The consequences are not easy to estimate. The remedy is in your hands, and there I leave it with confidence. All I ask for is a mere sliver of Axminster, not too ripe.' Is that quite clear, Miss Priddlequick?"

Miss Priddlequick usually looks at me as if I spent my week-ends shooting

at her grandmother without a game licence, but after lunch I got my minute with about twenty copies and signed it and sent it off. As the weeks passed without word hope mounted that perhaps I had found a chink in the official armour and men were out searching for the carpet of my dreams. Then one morning among all the hush-hush garbage in my "IN" tray I found my lovely loose minute, and across it scrawled in red ink the old theme-song of the Ministry: "Junior officers cannot be supplied with carpets."

Sometimes the human voice does unexpectedly well. I rang up the secretariat concerned and called attention to my minute.

"Is there no way of melting your wicked hearts?" I asked.

"Sorry, absolutely none. Try again in five years' time."

As I put back the receiver I noticed two men in bowler-hats standing politely by my desk.

"Come to lay the carpet, Sir."

"What carpet?" I demanded.

"This 'ere carpet, Sir."

"Who told you to?"

"Couldn't rightly say, Sir. It's just orders."

But before it was quarter laid I knew the worst. The blancmanges, coupled with that central rip, were unmistakable. I seized the foreman by the arm.

"You have a kind face," I said.

"I'll do anything within reason, Sir."

"Then take this carpet away and forget about me."

A look of pain sewed up his cheerful mouth.

"Ever so sorry, Sir, but we couldn't do that. You see, we got our instructions."

I went along to my friend once more.

"Is there any known way of getting rid of a carpet here?" I asked him.

"Only one," he said. "Arson in a loose minute." ERIC.

o o

Why Hitler Makes Speeches.

"Some people think Hitler suffers from an infororatory complex."

Schoolgirl's Essay.

o o

"The raids, like last Thursday, were scattered over a wide area."

Evening Paper.

Of course not quite such a wide area—nor for quite so long.

Our Booking-Office

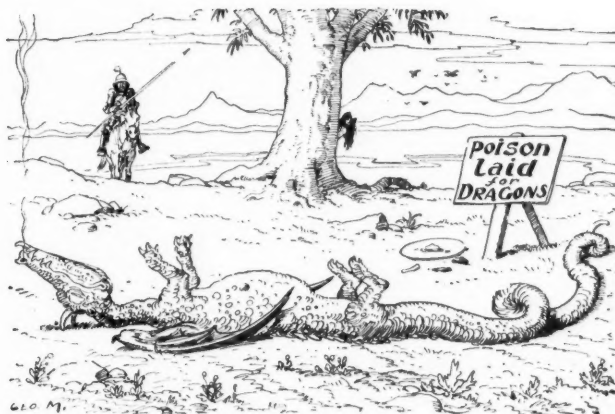
(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Cycle of Cathay

IN 1936 an American, Mr. GRAHAM PECK, set out on a world tour and got no further than China. But in China he travelled so far and shared such a rich diversity of native lives that *Through China's Wall* (COLLINS, 12/6) remains a record not only of topographical but of psychological penetration. China conquered Mr. PECK. He began by succumbing to post-Imperial Peking; left his flowery courtyard and its birdcages for the Gobi Desert; dwelt for six weeks in a Mongol "yurt" with an unwashed household of ex-bandits and horse-breeders; wintered in Szechuan province and explored the Tibetan border; returned to Chungking on a sampan; made a round of the treaty ports—which he found boring; worked for the Chinese Red Cross until it was disbanded by the Japanese; and left via Harbin and Siberia. For the Axis invader—and all the old totalitarian dodges of free heroin, faked incidents and open violence—Mr. PECK has a fierce distaste. But he sees China holding out in the West until the badger-faced invader is exhausted; and after that—though one hopes he is mistaken—the rapid modernization of one of the few unrifled treasure-houses of the world.

Proust Retrouvé

THE PROUST pundits will raise their high brows inches higher in surprise at anyone's daring to explain PROUST in English at all, and worse still at his daring to pull RUSKIN in at the start of PROUST's development and leaving out BERGSON till page 281. So much for them. For most of us the best thing about DERRICK LEON's *Introduction to Proust* (KEGAN PAUL, 12/6) is that while he allows us to shudder over the fantastic monsters of breath-taking insolence and unmentionable morals—*Guermites*, *Charlus*, *Jupien*, *Morel*—he has found the things that appeal to English PROUST-fans (the "Forsyte Saga" side of the "Temps Perdu"), and particularly PROUST's masterpiece of character-building, *Françoise*, a completely rigid structure made up entirely of weaknesses, cruel like a peasant to those nearest to her and so obstinate she never would admit the existence of telephones, and always insatiably curious about the exact amount other servants got in their tips. And then the intense pathos of *Marcel's* mother-grandmother and of *Albertine*. So good is Mr. LEON's relay of the death of *Albertine* that one picks up the wave-length at once and at once begins vibrating to the original poetry, not to be found anywhere else, and unachievable except by people like STENDHAL or JAMES JOYCE, who never short-circuit an emotion or blunt an effect as must always be done in 100,000-word commercial novels, no matter how successful.



HOW A PRUSSIAN ST. GEORGE WOULD HAVE DONE IT.

George Morrow, February 2nd, 1916

Dreams Come False

MISS PHYLLIS BENTLEY tells us that *Manhold* (GOLLANCZ, 9/6) completes for the present her series of historical novels about industrial life in the West Riding. The story begins in 1720, when DANIEL DEFOE and young JOHN COLLIER (*Tim Bobbin*—schoolmaster then and satirist to be) are riding into Yorkshire together. They stop first at a weaver's cottage and then at *Manhold*, the home of a rich clothier. It is here that the threads of the story are taken up, for the weaver's lovely little daughter and her cousin the clothier's son are fated to spend much of their turbulent future together long after DEFOE has ridden away. It is an unhappy book full of malice, sudden death and the decay of a great house. Yet at times the sadness is swirled away by the lusty northern air that blows through the story and by the vigour and sweetness of *Tim Bobbin*, with whose life MISS BENTLEY admits having taken liberties. It is a very long book, but not many will care to be interrupted when reading it.

Army Life

AN extremely readable short book is *What! No Morning Tea?* (GOLLANCZ, 4/6) by ANTHONY COTTERELL, an account of a conscript's first eight weeks in the Army. This is a day-by-day diary, written on the spot, and well-written too, by a competent and lively-minded journalist. It covers everything likely to happen to the average young man from the time he receives his calling-up papers, and it should entertain and instruct anyone with the least interest, direct or indirect, in the soldier's life.



"Do you mind if we have the News on while you're telling us about your bombs?"

The Cinema

A SIGNIFICANT thing about the cinema to-day is that no one calls it a wonder of science any more. A wonder of science is something which is always going wrong—those old crystal sets, for example, were great wonders of science—and in the early days, when a moving picture suddenly disappeared off the screen, before coming on again with the bottom half at the top, the audience would fill in the time with thinking how wonderful it was to have moving pictures at all. Now all that is finished with, and people have got to the stage of thinking that it is wonderful to have some moving pictures, but not others. In fact the cinema is not science, but fate; like the weather.

Now about going to the cinema. One way, and the easiest, is to walk into the nearest picture-house there is, buy a ticket, sit down in your seat and undo your shoes. But there is a proper and much longer way. To begin with, several people get together and decide

they want to go to a certain picture-house if the film is one they want to see. So the first step is to find out the title of the film. If there are two in the programme, then they find out the titles of both, and forget one immediately, this being a natural device which tells a film-goer which is the big picture and which the fill-up. Next these people decide if they want to see the film by balancing up who has seen it before and so doesn't want to again, who hasn't and so does want to, who has *and* wants to again, how long it takes to get there, who suggested the whole thing anyway, and so on.

Eventually these people arrive outside the cinema, and one of them, chosen as the most likely in a crisis, goes in to look at the sort of blackboard showing when each part of the programme begins. This is a ritual, or relic of something, because for one thing no one can remember a lot of niggly times like 5.17 for as long as it takes to get down the steps again to

the people outside; and for another, these people have got as far as the steps and are going in anyway.

Well, now. The person who went in to look at the blackboard walks up to the box-office, bends down so as to be heard through the gap under the glass—even if there is a gap in the middle of the glass too—asks what seats there are left, and then turns round and tells the others and asks which to get. This, again, is a ritual, because everyone will say "Half-a-crown." This may be some kind of specialized telepathy, or it may just be that no one wants to pay so much but everyone thinks the others do.

The actual paying for the seats, by the way, is so formalized as to be yet another piece of ritual. The person in the front of the party hands across as much money as will pay for everyone. The person immediately behind this person gives the front person enough for two tickets, the person behind *that* person holds out a two-shilling piece



"Ambleford? Through the 'Black Bull' and straight on."

and puts it away again, and any people behind this third person don't do anything, but say they will settle afterwards. It says a lot for film-goers that they usually *do* settle afterwards, but it will work out that the person in front loses one-and-six and someone else makes about ninepence. And, before I finish with tickets, I want to mention that when people hand their tickets to an attendant they get half back. This is so that one day, months later, they can turn out their pockets and find the half-ticket and feel very sad about the passing of time.

It is well known that the carpets in a cinema are sprung like mattresses, and even better known that the person sitting behind you talks and scuffles, while the person in front is eight feet tall, with very wide shoulders and a mop of springing hair. It has been called coincidence, but people have disproved this by moving to a seat *in front* of the person eight feet tall, when they have found that *this* person is talking and scuffling now, while in front of them is an even taller, wider person. Luckily, in front of this even taller person there is of course someone taller and wider still; so the person in front of you will have to lean alternately to the left and to the right to see the film, and you can see it too by

leaning alternately to the right and to the left.

This is about the only instance of co-operation among the people in a cinema. On the whole they are much too apt to suspect one another. They suspect it is the fault of the people round them that one of their party has had to sit three rows back; they have to look round now and then to see that this person is all right among all those strangers, and the person has to bob up and down to reassure them. People who put an umbrella under the seat never really enjoy a film, because the whole time they are subconsciously suspecting that someone is going to steal it; even if they keep their feet on the handle it doesn't help. But people at a cinema are most suspicious of all when they are meant to be joining in a song the cinema organ is playing. Anyone knowing all the ins and outs of a tune is suspected by the others to be a professional, with a free seat.

The only other thing you really need to know about the cinema is that the people who go to it can be divided into two sections, those who can't bear to see the end half of a film first, and those who can, perfectly well. Even when you know it, it doesn't get you anywhere. I mean, they never *are*

divided into two sections, but are all mixed up and arguing in the *foyer* about whether they shall go in now or wait till the end. I don't think you really need to know why it is called *foyer*, and whether you are meant to pronounce it right or wrong; because no one else knows either.

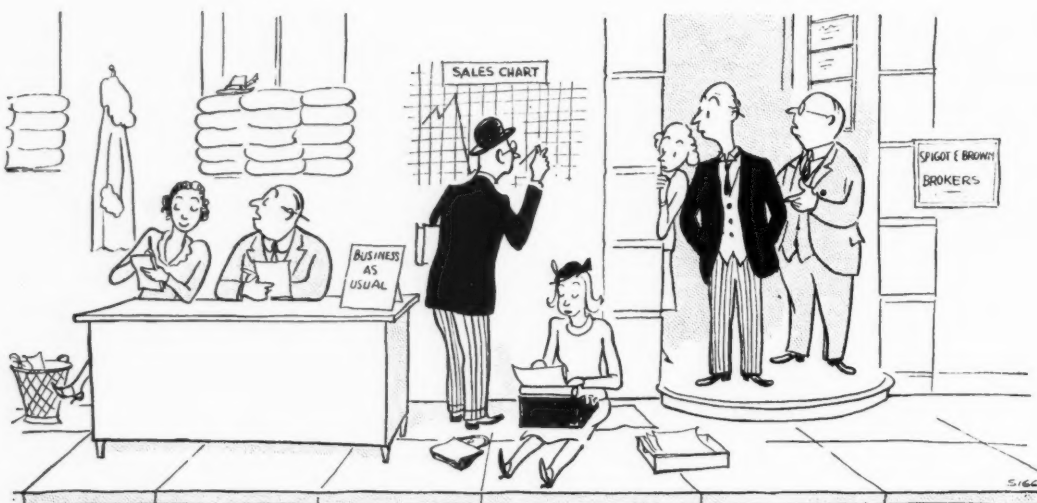
The Barrage Balloons

THAT hoary footpad Night,
With his one eye the Moon,
Steals in the failing light
The last lone balloon.

His shadowy garment hides
Many a hundred more;
Hour after hour he bides
To tell his treasures o'er,

Until at last the Sun,
Prompt constable of Day,
Startles the guilty one
With apprehending ray,

And with that fiery warning
The flag of dawn unfurls
On beaches of the morning
Rich with discovered pearls.



"What do you think of that? Our biggest competitors right on our blessed doorstep!"

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